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Observations on the second Commandment.

(Continued from p. 336.)

PART III.

OBSERVATIONS offering themselves from a review of the preceding parts.

1. It is very observable that the duties of the Christian life, and even those required in this second commandment, are exceedingly extensive, as they include the constant worship of God in all his institutions. Since they challenge the heart, and its warmest affections; that men pray always with all prayer and supplication, read the scriptures daily, be instant in season and out of season to hear the word, profess religion, and devote themselves and theirs to God; attend the sacraments, and honor God in all his institutions; that they do this in spirit and truth. Religion does not consist in performing some duties, but in doing them all; in observing all things whatsoever God has commanded. We must not only observe and keep pure and entire all the worship and ordinances of God ourselves, but we must laboriously and diligently teach others to do the same. Well may we adopt the language of the Psalmist, "Thy commandment is exceeding broad." How numerous are the means of our communion with the Father of our spirits? The evidence of the sincerity of our hearts, and of our real religion, consists in our observance of them all. Then shall we not be ashamed when we have respect unto all God's commandments.* The Saviour preached, Ye are my friends if ye do whatsoever I command you.†

2. Men who do not worship God in all his institutions, in a holy and spiritual manner, however fair and punctual they may be in dealing with men, have no true religion. This cannot exist without piety towards God, a conscientious and con-

* Psalm cxix. 6. † John xv. 14.

stant attendance on the divine institutions. However fair their characters may be in their commerce and external conduct towards men, while they neglect these, they are contemners of the divine sovereignty, reject God's dominion over them, despise his holy institutions, and all his wisdom, goodness, and paternal care in appointing them; they are haters of God, and are bringing his curse not only upon themselves, but upon their posterity, even unto the third and fourth generation. A great proportion of mankind place all their religion in honest and fair dealing, and affable and externally kind, complaisant conduct toward their neighbor. They call this righteousness. In this they place all their hopes of future happiness. But these are totally delusive. Where men have no piety, and neglect the divine institutions, and the duties contained in the first table of the law, there is no righteousness. All righteousness toward men is founded in the love of God, and in obedience to his will. All that which men call righteousness, where God is not regarded, is selfish, seeks the honor which cometh from men, or some other temporal good.

3. The blindness, carnal ease and madness of mankind are very observable, that under the light of the gospel, where the divine institutions are so fully made known, so expressly and abundantly commanded, guarded by such awful sanctions, and where men are allured to obedience by such endearing motives, they should so trifle with them; neglect, profane, and corrupt them! That they should have little conviction of sin and danger while they violate this command, and expose themselves and their posterity to the righteous judgments of God, from age to age, in this world, and eternally in that which is to come. The more clearly duty is revealed, the more forcibly it is enjoined, and the greater and more lasting the danger of neglecting it, the greater are the sin and madness which are discovered in disregarding and despising it. God is a jealous God; the closets, the families, and hearts of men are naked and open to his view. Christ walketh in the midst of the golden candlesticks, and knows the state and works of all his churches. He perfectly knows where and by whom his worship and ordinances are neglected, profaned, or mixed with idolatry and superstition. And he will by no means clear the guilty. Are not these things laid up in store with him, and sealed up among his treasures? Will not the Lord abhor the individuals, and the communities where his ordinances are neglected, despised and profaned? Will not his holy jealousy be awakened, his anger enkindled, and his soul avenged on such a nation? How great then are the unbelief and blindness of men, that they are easy and secure in such wickedness! What madness is in their hearts while they live, and after that they go to the dead!* They send forth their little ones as a flock, and their children dance. They spend their days in wealth,

* Eccles. ix. 3.

and in a moment go down to the grave.*

4. The sin and presumption of human impositions, and the commandments of men with respect to divine institutions, and the manner in which God is to be worshipped, rashly changing our religion or modes of worship, renouncing our Christian baptism, and for trifling or wicked purposes to adopt any mode of worship, or to set aside or neglect the divine ordinances, must be exceedingly great. God only knows himself, and in what manner it is most suitable that he should be worshipped, and what mode is best adapted to the instruction and edification of his people. He only has an entire sovereignty over us, and propriety in us. He only is Lord of the conscience, and has a right to institute the manner in which he will be worshipped. No worship, but that which he hath instituted can please him; but he must infinitely abhor it. Any addition to his worship is an invasion of his sovereignty, and high and inalienable prerogatives, as God over all. It is an impeachment of his wisdom and goodness. It is an attempt to teach him what is proper and decent in his own worship. What arrogance and presumption is this! With what prayerfulness and deep consideration ought we to take every step with respect to the divine worship, since it will have eternal consequences to ourselves and our posterity! There must be great presumption and wickedness in every thing rash and inconsiderate in this great concern. A great proportion of mankind seem to imagine themselves at liberty to worship God as they please, or to neglect his ordinances, and not worship him at all. But they will find it at last to have been of infinite moment to themselves, to their families, to the church of God, and to posterity, for ages to come. The profanation, corruption, and neglect of divine worship and ordinances, will at last bite like a serpent, and sting like an adder.

5. It is very observable, that individuals, families, and countries enjoying the true religion, are in great danger, when they neglect the worship of God, corrupt, neglect and despise his holy institutions. For this wickedness God brings his judgments upon a people, from one generation to another. This brought those dreadful judgments both spiritual and temporal upon his ancient covenant people. This was the charge which God brought against them, This have they done unto me: they have defiled my sanctuary in the same day, and have profaned my sabbaths.* Ye are gone away from mine ordinances, and have not kept them.† Do not the same charges lie against the people of this land, at this day? Are not the divine institutions, the worship and ordinances lamentably neglected, despised, and profaned? How generally do the men of this generation cast off fear and restrain prayer? Do they not profane the sabbath? Neglect family religion and government?

* Job xxi. 11, 13.

* Ezek. xxiii. 38. † Malachi iii. 7.

Do they not without restraint violate this second commandment, in almost every duty which it requires? Are not young people and children, taught by the examples of parents and heads of families to neglect and despise the divine ordinances, and contemn the authority of the Most High? Will they not do worse than their fathers, and fill up the measure of their sins? Is here not occasion for great lamentation, fear, and trembling? Will not these things bring great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people?

6. Who can but observe the incalculable importance of obedience to this divine precept? Of shunning the sins which it prohibits, and of performing the duties which it requires? Of explaining it, and exhibiting the reasons of it, and motives to enforce it, in the strongest point of view? There ought to be a united exertion among the preachers of the gospel, and heads of families, to engage the people to keep this commandment: to worship God continually; to worship him in spirit and in truth; to pray always with all prayer and supplication; to hear the voice of wisdom always, watching daily at her gates, and waiting at the posts of her doors; to maintain family religion and government and to honor God in all his institutions. These are the means which he hath appointed to teach his name, prevent sin, promote holiness, edify his body, perfect the saints, bring many sons to glory, and eternal honors to his great name. That his blessing may attend them, they must be preserved in their purity. They are essential to the continuance of the churches in the faith, order, and purity of the gospel; nay, to their very existence, as gospel churches. For Zion's sake therefore, neither priests nor people should hold their peace, and for Jerusalem's sake they should not rest, until there be a reformation, and the divine ordinances are more respected, more generally and devoutly attended; until family religion and government be revived. Is it not a time when all the watchmen upon the walls of our Jerusalem should not hold their peace, day nor night, and that all those who make mention of the Lord should not keep silence,* until the spirit be poured out from on high, and many people shall say, Come let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob, and he will teach us of his ways, and we shall walk in his path,† and the word and ordinances shall be precious to the people. The authority and glory of God, the infinite worth of his favor, the dreadfulness of his displeasure unitedly plead for all prayerfulness and exertions, relative to this point. Love to God and to Zion which he hath loved pleads for it. The peace and salvation of our country, that it may not be wasted by the divine judgments, plead for it. The peace and happiness of future ages, of children which shall be born plead, yes with great energy they plead, that a curse may not be entailed upon them for ages to come, nay that they may be blessed unto a thousand generations. The people

* Isaiah lxii. 1. 6. † Isaiah ii. 3.

may be entreated and urged for the fruit of their own body, that they may be delivered from shame and wrath, and be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. Language is too barren to express the importance of what is here urged. Oh, that its incalculable moment might make a deep and general impression. Oh, that there might be an united, perserving, and universal exertion, for the keeping pure and intire all such religious worship and ordinances as God hath appointed in his word!

Revival of Religion in Harwinton.

MESSRS. EDITORS,

YOU were kind enough to accept letters from me, containing an account of a revival of Religion in this town in the year 1799: and have given them a place in the first volume of your Magazine.

As it has pleased a gracious God to appear again in a special work of his grace among us; the following narrative is sent to you for publication if you think proper.

THE town of Harwinton was first settled in the year 1731. It now consists of about 250 families, 200 of which belong to the ecclesiastical society; the remainder are episcopalians, except one methodist and two baptists. In the year 1790, the communicants in the church thought proper to renew their profession and covenant. It was then found that the whole number was 128, only 54 of whom remain to the present day. In that, and the year following, God was pleased to excite an uncommon attention to serious things; in consequence of which, a considerable number were added to the church. After that, however, the removals by death and otherwise, were annually so many more than the additions, that the number was greatly diminished, until the revival in 1799. In consequence of which, the church in a little time received an addition of 120 members. Still however, the instances of death and removals into other places were so many more than the annual additions, that in 1805 the church consisted only of 200 members.

The late special work of God has been remarkable. The first appearance of this work was about the middle of Sept. 1805, nearly seven years from the beginning of that in 1799. Its progress was very rapid, attended with marks of divine sovereignty. In the course of four or five weeks after its first appearance, fourteen or fifteen were brought to entertain a joyful, yet humble hope of their conversion, from a state of enmity, to reconciliation to God. In the beginning of October occurred an instance, which became, by the blessing of God, a powerful mean of bringing conviction home to the consciences of others; and many became deeply impressed with a sense of the deceitful and desperately wicked nature of the heart, and of the awful displeasure of a holy God against it. After the period before mentioned, the work seemed to be suspen-

ded for nearly four weeks more. In the mean time instances of convictions and the power of them rather increased. By which God seemed to be giving testimony to the reality and sovereignty of his grace, shewing that it is his peculiar work, to *wound and to heal*, to convict of sin, and afford consolation to the sin-sick soul. It is to be observed, that though twenty or thirty persons were in great distress of mind, in view of a sinful heart, and a holy law, during the apparent suspension of the work; yet there was no ground to believe that relief was sent, during the whole period, to more than one soul. But soon after this many were favored with precious relief and real comfort, in view of the Lord Jesus Christ and his ability to save, and all in the way of exercising a cordial submission (as we have reason to hope) to God in Christ. Some however, remained in great distress for many weeks, till animal nature, in some cases, seemed to be nearly exhausted. To such, the revelation of Jesus Christ, as the glory of God and the suitable resting place of souls, was as life from the dead.

The work continued to progress, without very sensible abatement, for nearly six months; in which time numbers were hopefully converted, and such visible tokens of divine grace and infinite and sovereign love were exhibited, as gave abundant occasion for the warmest thanksgiving, "and the children of Zion were made joyful in their King," who appeared in his endearing glory to build it up.

Several things occurred besides the suspense already mentioned to manifest the divine sovereignty of this work.—While some well educated, moral and, apparently, religious young people, who had previously considered religion to be important, were continued under the pains of a wounded and comfortless spirit for fifty or sixty days; others who had scarcely ever had one realizing thought of eternity, were unexpectedly arrested, and in a few days became joyful subjects of religious hope.

At a time when sentiments of a poisonous nature are disseminated with great industry, and in the most alluring manner, there is no reason to wonder, if many should be seduced to neglect public worship and the means of grace, and become as usual in such cases, excessively bitter in their minds, if not in their speech, against any special work of God's spirit. But, to the praise of rich and glorious grace, be it said; some of this class have been arrested and, if we may judge from uniform appearances, humbled and changed. Instances of this kind have occurred in such peculiar circumstances, as to set at defiance every attempt to assign any sufficient cause, but that of the good pleasure and power of God. Indeed no sensible person, that would fairly look at the case, let his feelings of heart be be what they would, could afterwards venture to assign any other cause.

The wicked heart seemed to be overawed by the majesty and the sovereignty of the work; and to appear an opposer, was to appear to be led, not by ra-

tional views of things, but by the same spirit which actuated the Jews in their opposition to the work of God, when Paul and Barnabas were preaching successfully at Antioch, Acts xiii. 45.

At this time, several, who had been exceedingly prejudiced against experimental religion, and had, principally on that account, refused to worship with us, were signally affected with divine truth; and have come, and as experienced Christians, who love that truth which they once derided, have joined in communion with this church. One instance only will I mention. A woman, who had not attended our meetings, and scarcely any other for almost seven years, and was remarkably opposed to the idea of an awakening, was, in the very act of ridiculing a sister that was in some measure impressed, *pricked to the heart*; and after some violent but ineffectual attempts to remove and conceal her emotion, she was obliged to submit in a visible manner, to convictions of a very distressing kind. In consequence, she was found to attend with great earnestness and anxiety of soul, upon those means, against which she once had an obstinate prejudice.—And in short she has a very evident change of views, and character. She has been admitted into the church as a new-born child of God, and none can reasonably attribute her experience to delusion, or to any power short of that which is almighty.

The sovereignty and power of God in this gracious work appear, not only in respect to the persons who became the subjects of it, but also in respect to their ages. Though a few were of middle age, yet generally they were between thirteen and twenty five. Some, however, were much older. To one particular case I think I may invite attention. It is that of an old lady now deceased, who through infirmity of body was not able to attend public worship, and scarcely to go to a neighbor's for twelve or fifteen years. There is ground to hope, that this woman experienced a saving change of heart, by communications of the living grace of God, when she wanted but a few days of fourscore and eight years of age. She was duly examined for admission into the church, was approved and propounded; but the wise disposer of all events was pleased to take her away before she could be regularly admitted. She died in a fit. In her last day, when from all appearances there was good ground to believe she had the use of her understanding, though unable to speak, she gave tokens, which were understood to be decided manifestations of her faith and confidence in God.

If any wish to be informed of the views, exercises and feelings of the subjects of the present work; it may be observed that they correspond in nature and kind, to those of 1799, which are narrated in the first volume of the Magazine. To that and other narratives, the writer refers the reader. But although they thus in general correspond, yet, in several respects, there is a difference. That was principally among people

from twenty-five to forty-five years of age. This is mostly among the youth or those under twenty-five—about two thirds of them are of the latter description.

Convictions have at this time been, generally, more evidential of sovereignty and power. This is singular indeed; for from what had taken place before, among the middle aged, it might have been expected that there would have been less evidence of this, and more of the influence of example and persuasion; and this undoubtedly would have been the case had it been of men. But if it would not swell this narrative too large, it might be made to appear to all, that even in the religious families, to which reference will presently be made, the evidence has been decisive, that though God works in love and covenant faithfulness, yet it is when and where and by what means he pleases.

Convictions too have been at this time more pungent and severe; and of a greater variety as to their duration previous to their relief. There have been more instances out of the common way. Their eyes and countenances were remarkably fixed, during the time of religious worship and at other times, and it seemed that nothing could be able to divert their attention from the great concerns of the soul. A few appeared to be so far overcome, as at times to be scarcely able to stand; but our assemblies were always remarkably quiet and still.

Again, the hopeful converts have seemed to have at an earlier period, a greater acquaintance with the plague of their own hearts; and to have been made more painfully sensible of the remainder of corruption within them, in consequence of which several have suffered many days of distressing darkness—after they had good reason to hope they should be saved. For, (as I suppose is the case with all Christians) the hope of being for ever in heaven, was not sufficient to comfort them, while so much imperfection remained in them.

Like the former, this awakening has extended into almost every part of the society, but the converts are not so numerous. In that there were about 140 for whom we had reason to entertain a hope of their real conversion: the number now is but little more than half of that being only seventy-five.

Further, it deserves to be remarked that the greater part of the hopeful converts—yea, as many as nine out of ten, if I am not greatly deceived, are the children of religious parents, or who lived in pious and praying families. This seems to be a great encouragement to Christian parents, and may I be permitted to observe, that usually the faithful exertions of pious parents are crowned with success. Their instructions are not all in vain. Though at times they may nearly lose all hope, and their tenderest exertions seem only to make their young people sin the more; yet great is the benefit of persevering diligence; and most generally it proves in the end successful. It ought however to be noticed, that this is not al-

ways the case. To abase the pride of men, and to shew that regeneration is not the effect of a religious education alone; we find that a sovereign God is pleased, by his Holy Spirit, to enter some prayerless and irreligious families, and one or more in them is made and kept a shining monument of his grace, while others, in the same family, only see, and scoff, and perish. For the same purpose also, we find in a religious family, one or more, and perhaps, such as the world esteems the brightest, left totally callous and insensible—"*dead in trespasses and sins*," while the showers of divine love bring life and saving health to others. This is an awful distribution of his grace, and the insensible in religious families have occasion to tremble, and immediately set themselves to work out their salvation, lest, like the Jews of old, they shall at last find the dreadful portion of beholding their near relatives in the kingdom of God, and they themselves cast out.

In the former awakening it was observed, that the subjects of it being principally heads of families, cast a delightful aspect on the rising generation; and now, with pleasure we record, that many of the late converts are the children of those, who then introduced family instructions and prayer. In the month of October one was added to the church. In December four, and in January three. Almost the whole of these were considered as subjects of regenerating grace previous to this awakening; and, in this, were brought to a stronger and more comfortable hope. On the second Sabbath of March, 1806, twenty-two made a profession of religion. In May fourteen, in July four, in August six, and a number since, so as to make the whole sixty-two.

If I may judge from the feelings of Christians with whom I am acquainted, a detail of particular instances, in which God hath appeared in his glory, would be pleasing, and might, perhaps, as they proved in their actual occurrence, "still the enemy and avenger." But to make a proper selection for the purpose, more time is requisite than my present labors will allow. The effect of the late revivals is conspicuous, in a variety of things; especially in the harmony and peace, the unity and love, which pervade the society, and in the uncommonly great brotherly affection, that cements together the numerous members of the church. These effects, together with the consideration, that among two hundred members who have joined the church, in and since the former awakening, no one has given occasion of reproach by disorderly conduct, prove to the face of every opposer, that it is truly a work desirable and divine.

To close, I hope it will not appear arrogant to say, surely the members of this church, together with their pastor and the society, ought humbly and affectionately to acknowledge, that they have very abundant reason for the liveliest exercise of gratitude and praise; and for ever to bless the Lord of hosts for such wonderful and repeated tokens of his mercy,

and also continually to sing alleluiah. Amen.

From your friend and
humble servant,
JOSHUA WILLIAMS.

Harwinton, }
Feb. 17, 1807. }

P. S. Having mentioned in the foregoing narrative, that an instance occurred which became a powerful mean of bringing home conviction to the consciences of others; I subjoin a few particulars respecting it. It is the case of a young woman of a respectable family, whose character, from her earliest childhood, was uncommonly mild and good. She was less than fourteen years of age. As soon as she was capable, she was taught to pray; and when she was able to read, she was given to understand, that it was a duty to read the scriptures as a part of devotion. This she did almost daily, for a number of years. To be short, she was viewed by all her acquaintance, young and old, as one of the most moral and religious of her age that could be found. Indeed she thought herself to be truly religious, and the thought of dying gave her no great uneasiness, for she supposed that she should go to eternal blessedness; and perhaps had she died, no one of her acquaintance would have doubted of it. Soon after the awakening began she felt a little more engaged, but felt nothing very impressive till the beginning of October, when she was informed of the conviction and exercises of an intimate friend, who a little before, had been brought, it is hoped, to find rest in Jesus Christ. This, with some observations at a conference meeting the same evening, were blessed to convince her, that she had wholly mistaken the nature of the Christian religion; and the conviction was so clear and pungent, that her distress was very visible; it continued several days, in one of which I called and found her to appearance, as complete a picture of forlorn distress as I could remember to have seen. Affected with her case, I asked her what was the matter? She answered, "O Sir, I have read the bible in such a manner—and I have tried to pray but knew not what I was about." By these words she meant to communicate to me, as I understood by subsequent conversation, the sense she had of the great wickedness of reading the bible in a heedless and cursory manner, and also of having attempted to pray from selfish motives, and with a heart not filled with reverence and knowledge of God. It appeared to me very plainly, that her conduct had been so unexceptionable, that her awakened conscience could fix on no guilt but the selfishness and irreverence which had attended her religious devotions. From this alone she seemed to be convinced of the exceeding depravity of the heart, and of the absolute necessity of being born again; nor could any of the overtures of free mercy in the gospel afford her relief, as long as she was unrenewed. She remained in great distress of mind for two days more, one of which was the sabbath; when her mates and many of the young

people had an opportunity to see her. Sabbath evening she experienced relief; her great burden was removed, at which time she concluded that, for her great obstinacy and abuse of mercy, God had left her to be sealed up to final destruction. Under this impression she was led to take a view of God's government, and not long after said, with great solemnity and sweet simplicity, "I am losing all my impressions, and must perish; but it seems to me it is no matter what becomes of me, if God may be glorified. Soon after she opened the bible, and read and commented on some passages to the pleasing surprise of those that were present; among whom I was one. She also read some hymns with such feeling emphasis and rejoicing, that it was good to hear; after this she said "I am in a dreadful condition but joy will come." Having paused a while with a fixed countenance, she turned to me and asked me if God did not often restrain people. I told her he did; and to give her a full sight of the human heart, I turned her to the latter part of the first chapter of Romans. Having read about half of it, she exclaimed in the same artless simplicity, "what awful creatures we are!" and after reading the remainder said, "there is room enough for humility, but no reason for us to be proud." After this I pointed her to the account in Galatians v. and then to that in Corinthians, where the apostle, after mentioning the dreadful crimes of sinners, adds, "and such were some of you; but ye are washed; but ye are justified, &c." It was upon reading this, that she began to hope, that possibly she might be saved by Jesus Christ.

This case did so eminently show the necessity of a change of heart in all, that it seemed to carry irresistible conviction to many; for they were led to reflect, that if one, so unexceptionable in her life, and so apparrently religious, needed a new heart, and was in such distress without it, what must become of them, who in comparison of her had no religion at all. The case indeed was used for this purpose, and it is believed not altogether in vain. Soon many became convinced that the carnal mind, which was naturally within them, was enmity to God, and they were brought to view themselves and the law of God, in a light vastly different from any that they had before.

If, gentlemen, this narrative will in your opinion tend to advance the knowledge of the truth, you are at liberty to insert it—if you think otherwise, I shall be contented to have it remain unpublished. Your's,

J. Williams.

Memoirs of Deacon William Skinner.

For the Connecticut Evangelical Magazine.

Messrs. Editors,

HAVING had a lengthy and somewhat particular acquaintance with the subject of the following biographical sketches,

and been frequently conversant with him during his last sickness and confinement, I have thought proper to prepare and send them forward to you for publication, in your useful Magazine, if, on perusal, you shall judge proper.

In the narration and representation of facts, I have stated them, according to the best of my recollection, both in regard to those things I have had personal knowledge of, and such as I have received from his and other credible information. The phraseology may in various instances be different, and other circumstances, in point of order and method, may not be altogether correct, but so far as I have descended to some of the many particulars relating to his life, character and manifestations, both in health and sickness, I have endeavored to convey the ideas, and exhibit the facts with impartiality. May the blessing of God accompany the attempt, render the perusal of it edifying to Christians in general, and particularly to such as were more intimately acquainted with him.

Your's, &c. E. L.

Woodstock, 1st Society, February 20th, 1807.

DEACON William Skinner, the subject of the following memoir, was born at Malden, in the State of Massachusetts, in the month of July 1720. In very early life, at the age of about five or six years, he became deeply impressed with a conviction of his lost and ruined state by reason of sin, accompanied with anxious enquiries what he should do to be saved. Under these alarming apprehensions of mind, it appears that he improved a very considerable proportion of his time for some years, in reading, meditation and prayer. At this time also, he was fond of consulting, and listening to the conversation of those, who were thought to be men of knowledge and experience in religion. In this situation, though with some intervals of becoming more careless and formal, he continued for a number of years, calculating, no doubt, that he should be able to work out a righteousness of his own, thereby to pacify his own conscience, and secure a title to the divine favor. But no substantial comfort or relief could he find, till it pleased God, as he hoped, to enlighten his mind, and to shew him the mediatorial character and all-sufficiency of Christ, and the wisdom and glory of God as manifested in the gospel way of salvation. Not to enlarge here, upon the new and different views he now had, of the freedom and sovereignty of divine grace, and the correspondent exercises of his heart and life; at the age of about 17 years he was admitted to join the communion of the church at Malden, then under the pastoral care of the Rev. Mr. Emerson.

Judging from what he has frequently observed of the ministrations of that pious and godly divine, it appears that he was not only much edified in the divine life under his ministry, but through the blessing of God on his public and private instructions, accompanied on his own part, with an unusual attention

to reading, meditation and prayer, he became in early life, well instructed in the great and discriminating doctrines and precepts of divine revelation.

At the age of about 21 or 22 years, he removed from Malden to this town, where, having soon after settled in a family state, he resided, till he was removed by death on the 30th of January last, in the 87th year of his age.

In the year 1763, he was chosen to the office of a deacon in this church, in which capacity he has served with singular discretion, wisdom and fidelity for more than forty three years; excepting that the latter part of the time, and at his own request, on account of the infirmities of age, he was released from the more active services pertaining to the office. In the early part of his life, and till within a very few years, he was accustomed frequently to visit and pray with the sick, and to discourse with them and others who applied to him, in a very edifying and instructive manner.

He was endowed by his Creator, with a penetrating mind, a sound judgment, and a memory singularly tenacious. By his reading he became well acquainted with the holy scriptures, and the writings of the most eminent fathers in the reformed Christian church. As the scriptures were his most delightful study, and upon which he meditated with peculiar satisfaction, so his knowledge of the great and leading doctrines of revelation was exceeded by very few. In consequence of this, and by reason of his singularly good judgment and understanding, his remarks and observations on passages of scripture were peculiarly instructive, and calculated to remove many of the difficulties attending some of its more important doctrines. His acquaintance with experimental religion, and those exercises especially, which are more essential to the temper and life of a Christian, was very extensive, and evident to such of his Christian brethren, as were more intimately conversant with him. And in him, were found some of the more evident marks of a true disciple and an Israelite indeed, in whom there was no allowed guile. He was distinguished for his self-diffidence, modesty and humility; and in the true spirit of Christian lowliness of mind, he was wont to esteem others better than himself. He had at times such views of the depravity of his own heart, and the workings of inward corruption, that he could hardly reconcile them with the existence of a gracious principle in his soul; yet he thence learned more effectually, his own dependence, prized the doctrine of free grace, and appeared very earnestly to pant after an holy salvation.

In addition to this view of his Christian character and example in general, he appeared to have been eminently a man of prayer; and discovered a great degree of pertinency, fervor, affection and self-abasement in that devout exercise. Like a wrestling Jacob, he appeared to feel the worth of the blessings for which he prayed.

In the government and discipline of the church, particularly

in the case of an offending brother, he considered it a matter of high importance, to proceed according to the rule laid down by our Saviour in the 18th of Matthew: and in cases brought before the church for consideration, he was careful to form his opinion, by what appeared to him to be the scriptural rule, carefully attending to the nature and circumstances of the case. Far from being swayed by the opinions of others, any further than he saw them to be grounded on scripture and reason, he exercised a commendable independence in forming his judgment, and candidly assigned the reasons, in cases, wherein he differed from his brethren. Accordingly, in such high estimation was his judgment generally held, that his counsel and advice were much sought in difficult cases. In the capacity of a Christian brother, he was singularly influential, and useful, in laboring with the erroneous, and dealing with offenders. Actuated, as we believe, by that heavenly wisdom which is first pure, then peaceable, and with his eye upon the word, he studied to support the dignity of church discipline, while he attempted to gain a brother, and to keep the unity of the spirit, in the bond of peace.

As a friend, he was attentive, kind and faithful, and manifestly so, on Christian principles. As a professing follower of Christ, he was signally meek and humble, exemplary in his walk, and edifying in his conversation, actuated by that gratitude, kindness and benevolence, which mark the character of the disciples of Jesus, and influenced by that faith, which worketh by love to God and man.

Few have ever discovered a warmer attachment than he did to the institutions of the gospel. This he particularly manifested by an uniform and constant attendance on the public worship of God in his sanctuary. He appeared to possess the most noble enjoyment and satisfaction of soul while attending on the public dispensation of the word, and especially when the more peculiar and glorious doctrines of grace were explained and inculcated. Speaking of the gospel privileges he enjoyed, he used frequently to mention his sabbaths and seasons of public worship, observing, "I have thought I could say, *I was glad, when they said unto me, let us go into the house of the Lord; and how amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts.*" As might naturally be expected from his love to Zion, and the interests of Christ's kingdom, he appeared to enjoy great satisfaction and refreshment of soul in the attention to religion, which took place in this society about six years since, and when considerable numbers were added to the church; and though far advanced in years, he frequently attended and assisted on conference occasions, in different parts of the society.

So generally was he respected as a conscientious and godly man, that he appeared to have a witness in the conscience of every man, through the circle of his acquaintance, that he was one who feared God and eschewed evil.

Having thus noticed some of

the more leading features in the life and character of this venerable father, it may be expected, we should take some view of him during his last sickness, and in the closing scenes of his life.

His last sickness and confinement continued a little more than four months ; during which he was highly favored of God , with the free use of his reason and speech, and for the most part suffered little pain and distress of body. Of these circumstances, he frequently spake with abundant gratitude and thankfulness, as distinguishing favors, and laying him under peculiar obligations to the God of his life. Though, at times, he appeared to be more comfortable, to gain a little strength, and wus able to read an hour or more in the course of the day ; yet from the beginning of his sickness, he considered it highly probable, that it would terminate his life. And finding himself gradually sinking, he would frequently say, " my flesh and my heart fail ; Oh that God would be the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever." Though deeply sensible of his own depravity, vileness, and unworthiness in the sight of God, and that he was most justly deserving of his everlasting displeasure, yet he was remarkably strengthened, and raised above the fears of death ; and in a humble reliance on the merit and atonement of Christ, he appeared to enjoy the comfort of a victory, and to meet the king of terrors as a messenger of peace. Being asked with respect to the state of his mind, his views of death and another world, he observed, and that repeately, that death did not appear so formidable to him, as he had expected it would, and that he felt very little or no anxiety about the time of his departure. He appeared, at times, to be at a loss, how to account for it, that he should be no more exercised and alarmed at the thoughts of dying ; and said, he did not know, but it might be owing to his stupidity. In reply to which, I observed, among other things, that we trusted he had committed the great concerns of his soul into the hands of Christ, to which he replied with his usual modesty and self-diffidence, " I have thought so." I further observed, that he had great cause of thankfulness, that God did not leave him to the buffetings of Satan, as he has frequently seen fit to do with respect to some of his dear children, near the close of life. From this, he took occasion to speak very feelingly and somewhat largely of the wonderful and distinguishing goodness of God to him, in many respects both temporal and spiritual, and that from early life ; of the wonders of grace and mercy, which it seemed he had not words sufficient to express ; and how kindly he had ordered the circumstances of his present sickness. In view of free and sovereign grace, and of the astonishing wisdom of God in the work of redemption, he frequently spake in strains of rapture and pleasing admiration ; and at one time in particular, said, " it seemed as though he wanted all the world

should join with him in celebrating the praises of God."

So far was he from murmuring and complaints during his long confinement, that he frequently and feelingly spake of the kind and faithful attention of his family, and that they appeared willing to do every thing in their power to make him comfortable. Nothing appeared to be more congenial to his feelings, than a contemplation of the glorious attributes and wise government of Jehovah; and it was a darling theme and pleasing employment to him, to recount the loving kindness of God. When asked such questions as were calculated to bring the divine character and government into view, and especially such dispensations as were dark and mysterious to our limited understandings, he usually expressed the highest satisfaction and confidence in the thought that God held the reins of government in his own hand, and ordered all things well; and in the conclusion of his remarks on the subject, it became an expression somewhat proverbial with him, "Good is the word, good is the will, and good is the way of the Lord." When questioned as to his own hopes and prospects of future happiness; though he had hopes, he did not ordinarily express them with any great degree of assurance, but with that modesty and self-diffidence, which was a singular trait in his character; at the same time, he would speak with apparent satisfaction, of the rectitude of God's government; that he would be perfectly just, should he cast him off for ever; and if ever he was saved and brought to heaven, it would be a signal manifestation of free and sovereign grace, and speaking of the heights and depths, the lengths and breadths of the love of Christ, he would sometimes conclude these and similar remarks, with this consoling observation, "Infinite wisdom cannot err, infinite power cannot fail!"

His discourses, counsels and prayers, with his family and others, who were with him from time to time, were singularly well adapted and instructive, discovering at once, that strength of mind, self-possession, calmness, and gracious exercise of heart, which are rarely to be found. What he omitted at one time, which he thought important or suitable to mention, he was careful to bring into view and speak of at another opportunity; so that in things of a spiritual nature, he was peculiarly solicitous to set his house in order. At one time, when I was present, about three months before his decease, viewing his dissolution as probably near at hand, and a number of his children being present, it was suggested to him as a thing desirable that he should give them a father's blessing before he died. After a little pause, he attempted a compliance with the proposal, and continued his discourse, interspersed with prayers, counsels and admonitions, for the space of fifteen or twenty minutes; and in a manner, very remarkable for pertinency, correctness and method, considering his very weak and low state. He brought the case of

his children somewhat particularly into view, both those who were with him and such as were abroad; those who had made a public profession of religion and those who had not; adapting his counsels and prayers to their case accordingly, in a manner highly moving and instructive; a scene which it is presumed, those who were present cannot soon forget. He then brought the case of his pastor into view, praying for him with fervor and affection, that he might be both faithful and successful in his labors, and favored with divine influence and support: Then for the church, of which he was a member, that it might be built up, and made to prosper under the administrations of the gospel, and that God would revive his work among the people. After this, he prayed for ministers and churches in general; that God would raise up and maintain a godly ministry, in the land, and support a godly discipline in his churches. After having gone through with these particulars, much in the manner as now related, he raised his hands from the bed on which he lay, clasped them together, and in a most solemn and devout manner, commended his own soul to God through Jesus Christ; a circumstance, which has reminded me of good old Simeon, who had waited for the consolation of Israel, and who, upon having embraced the infant Saviour in the arms of faith and love, said "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation."

Something similar to this, as appears by information from the family, he exhibited in several instances afterwards. Particularly about a week before he left the world, he was wonderfully strengthened in prayer, and plead with great fervency for the ministers of the gospel, and the churches of Christ; interceding with God in behalf of Zion, as an interest which lay very near his heart. At the same time, he particularly brought into view the case of missionary societies, and those who are employed on missions, earnestly praying for the success of their efforts, and commending them to God, in whose cause they are embarked. He further took special notice of the case of the dispersed Jews, pleading powerfully for their ingathering; and that, to this end, God would bless and succeed the labors of the converted Jew,* who had embraced the Christian faith, and was preaching to his brethren of that nation, the unsearchable riches of Christ.

From the general tenor of his remarks and conversation on the scriptures, during his confinement, it appeared that he had high and noble enjoyment, in contemplating various passages, in which the wisdom of God and the glory of Christ were signally displayed. A specimen of this, he manifested, about five or six weeks before his death. He observed to me,

* Referring to Mr. *Frey*, a converted Jew from Germany, and who has for some time been employed in preaching to his brethren the offspring of Abraham.

that the Saturday night before, he had little or no sleep, though exercised with no great pain of body; that his mind had been contemplating on many passages of scripture, and more particularly on the parable of the merchantman seeking goodly pearls, of whom it is said, "when he had found one pearl of great price, he went and sold all that he had, and bought it." It appeared to him, he never before had such views of the parable, as at that time; that Christ who was there represented under the similitude of the most costly pearl, appeared to him so exceedingly precious, and with such infinite dignity, glory and all-sufficiency, that his soul was on the wing, and drawn out after him as the chief among ten thousands, with desires so intent and ardent, that he could not well endure the thought of having his prospects again clouded. He was much moved while he related the scene, and seemed again to enjoy the satisfaction of a renewed view of Christ; and concluded with saying, Oh, that it may not be "as the morning cloud and the early dew, which soon passeth away."

At another time, having brought into view the probability of his leaving the world in a very short time, and that we trusted he would soon be admitted to the pure and glorious services and enjoyments of he heavenly state, and come into the full and uninterrupted possession of that *pearl of great price*, of which he had lately had such transporting views; he replied in a very feeling manner, "Is it possible?"

Not to mention other instances; the last time in which I visited him, being about three or four days before his decease, I had considerable conversation and prayed with him as usual; found him very serene and comfortable in the views of death; and the interview, as in former instances, was highly pleasing, affecting and instructive. Being about to take my leave of him, it occurred to my mind to repeat to him those words in John xiv. which introduces our Lords farewel discourse to his disciples, "In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you: and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." Upon which he added in a very feeling manner, those words of Christ in his intercessory prayer, Chapter xvii. 24. "Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory."

I am informed, that he continued apparently in the full possession of his reason to the last hour of his life, and was able to speak more or less, till but a short time before he expired. Some of the last words he spake were, in attempting to repeat some of the lines in the 38th Hymn, 2d book, of Dr. Watts; and which he had frequently been fond of repeating throughout.

Happy the heart where graces reign,
Where love inspires the breast;
Love is the brightest of the train,
And strengthens all the rest, &c.

Not able to articulate, but with great difficulty, one of his sons took the book, found the hymn, and read the first verse to him, and then paused. Upon which, with a faint expression of the voice, he at the same time motioned with the hand, to have him proceed, which he did, till he had finished the hymn; the last words of which are,

Before we quite forsake our clay,
Or leave this dark abode,
The wings of love bear us away,
To see our smiling God.

In a very short time after the reading of these words to him, he fell asleep in Jesus (as we believe) and entered into that rest which remaineth for the people of God. "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord, from henceforth; yea, saith the spirit, that they may rest from their labors and their works do follow them." Such also shall have a "remembrance in the resurrection of the just; and the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne, shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."

On the first day of February, his funeral was attended; upon which occasion a discourse was delivered from 2. Kings, ii. Chapter 12 verse, "My Father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof."

In order to a wise and profitable improvement of such a dispensation, is it not highly important, that not only the surviving relatives, but the churches of Christ in our land, and particularly that, of which he was a member, should seriously attend to the language of it. If those are removed, who, like this our venerable father and friend, are eminent for their wisdom and piety, the event must be sensibly felt by those who were duly sensible of their usefulness and worth. If these are the men, who, while living, make up the hedge and stand in the gap; if by their wisdom, prayers and example, they do, under God, contribute greatly, to the preservation of religion among a people, and the averting of divine judgments, is not their removal calculated justly to alarm the apprehensions of those who are left behind? Should not these indications of the divine displeasure, and the dark clouds which are thereby spread over God's heritage, deeply humble us before him, and lead us fervently to adopt the language of the devout Psalmist, "Help Lord, for the godly man ceaseth, for the faithful fail from among the children of men." Sensible of their dependence on him, and fully persuaded that the spirit of the Lord is not straitened, what better expedient can the surviving friends of Zion adopt, than to have recourse to him, who is the great repairer of breaches, and the restorer of paths to dwell in, that the spirit of Elijah may rest on Elisha; and in full and humble confidence, that the great Head of the church is able by his spirit and grace, to raise up Jacob though he be small.

But in mourning for the venerable and pious dead, we should not sorrow as those who have no hope, or whose prospects

are bounded by the narrow limits of time. He who brought life and immortality to light by the gospel, has brightened the scene, and gladened the prospect. Here we are instructed from the highest authority, that as Jesus died and rose again, even so, those who sleep in Jesus, will God bring with him. This wipes away the reproach of the saints; this clears the honor of God's word. And by this it appears, that he is not ashamed to be called their God, for he hath prepared for them a city, even a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

Events in the life of Mrs. Mary Yates.

WHILE it is pleasing to witness the living examples of those who "adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour by their holy conversation and godliness," it, at the same time, comforts and animates other sojourners, as they travel thro' this vale of tears to the heavenly Jerusalem. "Be ye followers of them, who through faith and patience inherit the promises," is the apostolic direction. And as the light of such, in many instances, shines but a little while, before they are removed to the world of spirits; it has been thought a commendable desire in the disciples of the Saviour, that those, who have testified their unfeigned belief of the truth and excellence of his holy religion, by a life devoted to him, should continue to speak after their death.

For this reason it is now attempted to record some events in the life of Mrs. Mary Yates, who departed this life, in the pleasing hope of a more perfect enjoyment of her Saviour, on the 31st of Oct. 1806.

She was the youngest daughter of David Austin, Esq. of New Haven, and was born in Aug. 1776. Her parents were both professors of religion. Every one who has a just view of religion as the "one thing needful," and of the declaration of the faithful God, that he "sheweth mercy unto the thousandth generation of them that love him," will know how to appreciate the divine favor in giving her religious parents. Her mother was removed from her by death in the 6th year of her age. We may confidently conclude, however, that, while living, she had often led her infant mind to the contemplation of her Saviour, and had repeatedly dedicated her to him in prayer.

In the second marriage of her father, she was again favored with a pious and faithful guide of her inexperienced years.

The kind and compassionate disposition of the subject of these memoirs was manifested, as occasions offered, by a great sympathy in the sufferings of the distressed, and by exertions to relieve them. Fervent in her affections, and faithful in her friendships, she was highly beloved by her acquaintance.—Ready in her apprehension, and correct in her judgment, she improved, to good purpose, the opportunities with which she was favored, for acquiring the useful and ornamental accom-

plishments. "One thing," however, like the naturally amiable youth, Luke xviii, 22. she "yet lacked."

"Born in a world of guilt, she drew
Contagion with her breath,
And, as her life advanc'd, she grew
A juster prey for death."

Notwithstanding the acknowledged difference there is in the natural tempers of persons, nothing, so far as the everlasting welfare of the soul is concerned, can make up the loss of the holy image of God, destroyed in man, by the apostacy of our unhappy race. On the contrary, there is in every child of Adam a radical and total destiution of that "holiness without which no man shall see the Lord." Of this truth, she was soon to have a deep and undoubting conviction, from her own painful experience, under the operation of the Holy Ghost, who alone thoroughly "convinceth of sin."

In the course of divine providence, in which "the blind are led in a way they know not, and in paths that they have not known," she, in the early part of youth, was removed from her father's to Elizabeth Town, N. J. During her residence at this place, there was a revival of religion. The Lord, who knew from the beginning, what he would do for her, and for what station in life he would prepare her, was pleased, here to give her a view of her condition, as being "without hope, and without God in the world." A thorough conviction that her "heart was deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked," filled her with distress. "The commandment came—sin revived—and she died," as to any expectation of being received to heaven, in the state she then was. This distress continued a number of weeks. Aware now of the deceitfulness of the heart, she was filled with anxiety, lest she should be deluded by hers, lest her present convictions should, after a while, subside, and she should be led to mistake the reverence for God and religion, which she had acquired, by education, for a cordial reconciliation to him. After a season of distressing anxiety, she obtained a comfortable hope, and dedicated herself to God, in Christ, —publicly covenanting to be his, and humbly professing that she could say, "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee." She still retained, however, a jealousy over her heart.

After a season of "peace and joy in believing," this jealousy was excited, afresh, by hearing a preacher, personally unknown to her, set forth, in a sermon, some very high and enthusiastic experiences in religion, representing them, at the same time, as a rule for self examination. Conscious that she fell short of what she heard, she supposed that she had been taken in the very snare which she had feared. My heart,—my treacherous heart has deceived me: all the steps I have taken are totally wrong, and all my hope is a delusion. She returned from divine service in deep distress,—and retiring to a private room, threw herself at the feet of Jesus, bewailing the insensibility

and treachery of her heart, and imploring his forgivness and grace. She now felt, as she afterwards expressed to a friend, like a criminal hanging at the horns of the altar—very guilty—very vile—and having no hope, except from the sovereign mercy of God. Before she left this retirement, she had a view of the all-sufficiency there is in Christ,and felt an ardent cleaving to him as the Saviour of *sinners*, and as the sure and only refuge. She again threw herself upon the mercy of God in Christ, earnestly praying for the pardon of her sins, and for his quickening and sanctifying grace.

From this retirement, she returned much relieved.

The state of her mind after this, was, in general, more uniform. Having vowed to be the Lord's she felt her devotedness to him ; and retaining through life a sense of the deceitfulness of the human heart, it was her habitual prayer to be led, more and more to a knowledge of hers and also of him " who searcheth the hearts and trieth the reins" of the children of men.

Passing over several incidents of less moment, a view will next be taken of an important event in the life of the subject of these memoirs, her marriage Oct. 8, 1797, with Mr. Andrew Yates, then a candidate for the gospel ministry, and connected with Union College, Schenectady—and now pastor of the first church in East-Hartford. A transaction of such importance, being often a crisis, from which the future happiness or misery of the parties is to be dated, can never be treated by a considerate, and especially by a religious mind, with levity. Her religious exercises, and some of her sentiments relative to the mutual duties of the marriage covenant, may be learned from a letter which she handed to Mr. Y. on the day previous to their marriage ; the following extracts from which have been obtained.

* * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * " Pardon me my dear friend, when I acknowledge that my feelings are incommunicable [verbally] even to you. Though the important hour is fast approaching which shall unite us for life, yet I feel my heart too full to express all my wishes at such an important crisis. And though you are acquainted with my sentiments, and possibly with my disposition, yet, methinks I could wish my heart laid open more fully to your view, that your just knowledge of me might prevent the least disappointment, through the path, in which we shall, shortly, solemnly engage to walk, in love until death us do part. O my friend, could I tell you what I am, or what I shall be under crosses, afflictions, disappointments, and all the formidable company of distresses, which lie in wait to come upon us through this wilderness world, I might then help you to a knowledge of myself. But alas! this I cannot do. Whatever I am, this you will remember, that, far from deceiving you, in the least, by appearing in your eyes what I am not, I ardently wish my heart and soul were open to you as the day. I am surrounded not only with foibles, but errors. Let your eyes not

be open to them at all times, and when you see them, *reprove me*; but do it in such a way of kindness, that the manner of reproof may not wound more than a sense of the fault. Perhaps you will say, this is an unnecessary request: I hope it may be so, and trust it is; but, my friend, we know the feelings may be wounded for want of reflection. Such a wound would be to me, beyond expression painful. You will discover my many weaknesses, be faithful in discharging the duty of friendship. It is sometimes a painful office; but, when it is kindly received, the satisfaction exceeds the pain.

* *

" In such a connection as we are about to form, there are a thousand nameless attentions, on the part of each, which must not be omitted; and a thousand little inattentions which must not be too often or too nicely observed. The peace of persons, in this connection, I believe does as often depend on what an uninterested person would call trifles, as on greater circumstances. There is a certain delicacy and tenderness of feeling, that is open to the least occurrence, and if wounded, proves deeper than we might, at first, be aware of. If such a wound should at any time be given, let there be no delay on either side to heal it, and by the soothing language of affection to prevent its poisonous effects from spreading too far.

To say, I wish we might live together as none others have done, would be a romantic wish; but to wish we might live together as we ought, is not improper, and it is what I most sincerely do. Did I not hope to be what I ought, a helpmeet in spiritual as well as in temporal things, or were I to know that I should be a weight to hinder you from running with diligence the Christian race, I would cease to say more, and fly the approaching union as your and my greatest bane; but God grant it may be otherwise. If I am not an assistant in those important concerns, oh, may my dull and feeble spirit never, for a moment, hinder your progress in the divine life. May it be our great object and uniform endeavor, to be mutual assistants to each other while here; that when we have passed this vale of tears we may look back with heartfelt satisfaction. And when the awful hour of separation comes, may religion's soft hand be extended to wipe the tear from the eye of affliction, and her language sooth the soul. May each, in receiving the other, receive a blessing which shall be resigned when called for with this exclamation, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord."

It pleased God to continue her life nine years after this. Four years she resided at Schenectady, and five at East-Hartford, greatly beloved and respected by the inhabitants, and by her numerous acquaintance, for her peculiarly mild, amiable and benevolent temper, her judiciousness, her sense of propriety, her hospitality, and her pious, meek, unassuming deportment. Entertaining a humble opinion of her own proficiency in knowledge, she was pleased with hearing the religi-

ous conversation of others; especially of those whom she esteemed for their piety. To her husband, she proved an helpmeet indeed, whom he often consulted, but who forbore to give her opinion respecting matters of importance until requested. He changed his situation once, and had an invitation to remove a second time; but she declined expressing an opinion, or wish, until he had decided; observing that she was ready to go where God, in his providence, should direct, when her husband had decided it was her duty to accompany him.

For some years before her death, a declining health, accompanied with hectical symptoms, reminded her that her time would probably be short. Her last sickness continued nearly eight months. From its commencement she was impressed with the idea, that it would terminate in death; and that she should be brought to her grave through a long and tedious series of sufferings. This excited her to pray earnestly for divine grace; that her mind might be fortified by a stedfast reliance on the strength of her Saviour, and that she might be enabled to endure patiently whatever he should be pleased to lay upon her. With composure, she made the arrangements necessary for her final departure from her family, and she generally conversed upon the subject with the calmness of a person about to undertake a journey to a distant though desirable habitation. "God," she observed, "is holy—his people in heaven are like him—the happiness of heaven is holy; I therefore desire to be there, I wish to see him as he is—but if ever I enter there, it must be as a sinner saved by the blood of Christ. I know the sufficiency of Christ, and rely upon him alone—if my heart does not deceive me."

Hymns and passages of scripture committed to memory in her youth, were now of great service, by furnishing her with subjects for very agreeable and improving meditation.*

* This is a practice strongly recommended by the experience of thousands of the children of God. Besides the general reason, which always exists, for enriching the mind with divine knowledge, there is this additional motive for committing to memory select pieces which are sentimental and pious, and especially "the words which the Holy Ghost teacheth;" that, hereby, an invaluable treasure is laid up in store, against the time, when the person, from whatever cause, is deprived of the privilege of reading, or is in deep affliction and temptation. "Trouble and anguish," saith the Psalmist, "have take hold on me; yet thy commandments are my delights. Uphold me according unto thy word, that I may live. Unless thy love had been my delight, I should then have perished in mine affliction. I will never forget thy precepts: for with them thou hast quickened me. This is my comfort in my affliction. Thy testimonies are my counsellors. Let thy salvation come unto me, O Lord, even according to thy word: so shall I have wherewith to answer him [especially Satan Rev. xii. 10.] that reproacheth me. I love thy commandments above gold, yea, above fine gold."

"The children of this world" anxiously treasure up wealth against the time (they say) of sickness or old age. Let "the children of light" be admonished that the "law of the mouth of their Saviour is better than thousands of gold and silver." Lay up this treausure therefore diligently, while the faculties of body and mind are unimpared.

Though generally possessing her soul in sweet serenity, and calm, patient resignation; yet there were times, when she was agitated with fears, lest her patience should fail under accumulated and long continued distress. These fears she endeavored to allay, by a consideration of the power and faithfulness of her Saviour, and usually succeeded. On one of these occasions she thus addressed her brother, "You remember my dedication to God, and I know he is able to keep what I have committed to him."

There were times also, when a sense of unworthiness, and apprehensions lest her heart should after all, deceive her, interposed, for a season, a dark cloud, between God and her soul. At such times, it is very worthy of notice, that the best mean of relief, and that which almost universally succeeded, was a plain and simple enumeration by some intelligent person, of the *peculiarities* of the Christian doctrines, such as the covenant of redemption—free sovereign grace—the atonement made by God our Saviour on the cross—the provision made for the special influences of the Holy Ghost, by which the sinner is "created anew in Christ Jesus"—the resurrection of the saints in the image of God—the holy services, and disinterested enjoyments of heaven, and the pleasure that will be derived, from the deep humility and the ardent, pious affections of the happy inhabitants towards God, and each other, that will there prevail without end.

On the morning before her death, she directed her children (three lovely sons) to be called to her. They approached her, one after another. The natural affections, which are not extinguished in the breast of a virtuous parent till nature is dissolved, now put in their last claim for indulgence. They were indulged for a moment, "Oh, my son!" said she, taking the hand of the eldest. A mother's tenderness beamed in her emaciated countenance. A mother's prayer was offered to a faithful covenant God, to whom they had been dedicated. Her soul hovered for a moment, over these dear objects of her earthly care; but the eternal scene, just before her, soon reoccupied her mind. She bid a last adieu to her babes, and with them, to the exercise of the natural affections, which, though so necessary and so lovely in this life, are for ever to cease when the spirit has passed into that world, "where they neither marry nor are given in marriage; but are as the angels of God." Her children and friends, she observed, were in the Lord's hands, and she could, without distrust, leave them all with him.

She discerned the symptoms of approaching death as soon as any who were present, and spake of them with composure.

Towards the close of life, the paroxysms of distress became more frequent. In one of these she observed, "I expect the phlegm in my throat will presently strangle me, and I shall sleep in Jesus." In another, she expressed an ardent desire to depart; but added, "God's time is the best time, and I hope I shall with patience wait for

it." In the midst of another, which continued for a long time and was very distressing, she enquired of her husband, "Do you suppose this is the hour?" He replied, "God only knows." "True," she rejoined, "he knows, and that is enough." When the last, the fatal paroxysm seized her—sensible of her condition, and appearing to be filled with great joy in the prospect, she lifted up her eyes and hands towards heaven—till her hands fell, her eyes were set, and her countenance was fixed in death.

Reader—Are you a parent? Meditate solemnly upon the trust which providence has committed to your care,—a trust, the adequate value of which no created being can estimate. Together with your trust, God has put into your hands your instructions. Consider what he demands from you: "It is required in stewards that a man be found faithful."

Remember, "there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave." Lay it to your heart, that the time is short:—with you it may be very short. Soon the hour arrives, when you bid the last adieu to those who have been under your care, and you look forward, with the trembling expectation af standing in the presence of your Judge, to "give an account of your stewardship." In this trying hour, it affords a consolation which no language can describe, to be able to say, with deep humility indeed, yet, with the testimony of an approving conscience, "I have been faithful."

On Evil Speaking.

Messrs. Editors.

ALTHOUGH I have read your useful publication from the beginning, I do not recollect to have seen any thing on the sin of speaking evil. A review of the tables of contents affixed to the different volumes satisfied me that no observations had been communicated on so common a sin. Having not long since witnessed the commission of this sin, it occurred to my mind, that a few observations might be useful, at least to awaken reflection in the bosoms of the wise, and save them from both the doing and the suffering of evil in this way.

To distinguish the sin under consideration from slander legally considered, let it be observed that it does by no means imply that malice and falsehood, which constitute the nature of slander. It may be committed without any malicious designs, and in perfect consistence with the strictest veracity, although it sometimes is accompanied by the one or the other. It is nearly allied to slander and, in the downward way of sin, it is the step which is immediately succeeded by it.

Evil speaking consists in making known the supposed sins and failings of others, without any good end.

There are instances which, not only justify but demand the exposure of the failings and sins of others, as far as we *know* them. Many of these occur. Their general character is this, where individual or public good requires it. My neighbor is about to entrust his pro-

perty in the hands of one whom I know to be a knave; the command, "love thy neighbour as thyself;" obliges me to apprize him of his danger as much as it would in the case of a blind man who is exposed to peril for the want of sight. When summoned by the laws of the land to testify respecting particulars touching the character of any, the public good demands the truth without evasion or reserve. In these and such like instances, in which we expose the faults of others, we are far from beingguilty of the crime of evil speaking. They are obviously distinguished from this sin by the end that is had in view. They have in view a good end, evil speaking has none that is good.

A report injurious to the character of a neighbour hath reached us. It is believed, whether on sufficent grounds is needless to determine. Suppose it is accompanied with every testimony necessary to support its credibility. With the sincere belief of its truth we retail the rumor we have heard. It is made the subject of conversation with a friend or in the social circles, merely for the purpose of telling some new thing, or to afford matter for conversation, or which is worse, to gratify envy or malice. Those who have never heard, are informed; and those who know already join in expressions of surprise, of censure or of pretended pity. This is evil speaking.

It is a sin of greater guilt than many are aware of.—How far is such conduct from doing to others as we would they should do unto us! If we have been guilty of injuring our own character, we cannot be willing that any should mangle and open the wounds afresh. You are a penitent and with a broken heart mourn over your sins, you are willing and desirous that others should know your fall and its circumstances, together with your repentence, that all may take warning and that, he that standeth may take heed lest he fall; but you are by no means willing to be the subject of careless conversation, still less of censorious and malicious animadversions. How far also is evil speaking from "the wisdom that is from above, and is first pure, then peaceable, gentle and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy!" How little does it savor of that charity, which thinketh no evil, and which when faith shall be lost in vision, and hope in enjoyment, shall never fail! To speak evil is utterly inconsistent with the Christian character. Wherever it is found, it is to be considered as the ebullition of an impure heart, and whatever plausible appearance of religion may be found with such, they are destitute of the love of God. —"If any among you seem to be religious," saith the apostle James, "and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, that man's religion is vain."

This consideration, that evil speaking is an evidence that the love of God is not within us, I am aware, has influence with them only who entertain a hope that the same mind is in them which was also in Christ Jesus. With others who have not the love of God within them

it has no weight; a thousand delusions blind them against the odiousness of a spirit unreconciled to God—I would therefore observe further,

That in the practice of evil speaking, there is something that discovers a spirit under the influence of the foulest passions.

In its most favorable light, when nothing more than known truth is declared, to expose the faults of others unnecessarily, appears like taking a secret delight in traduction. To say, no harm is meant, is only acting the part of the fool "that casteth firebrands, arrows and death—and saith am not I in sport?" Madness indeed, that mangles and deals in death blows with a smiling face!

If the defamation which is retailed by the evil speaker, is received without credible evidence of its truth, such evidence as is sufficient fully to satify an unprejudiced mind; it discovers in a more striking light a strong desire to traduce. The heart must be bitter indeed which exposes the faults of others needlessly, but that exceeds in bitterness, which rests the charges of detraction on evidence that is insufficient to support them.

But if the slanderous rumor comes, from the mouth of falsehood and infamy, from the mouth of a lying enemy, or is attended with evidences of its falsehood, how base must be the spirit that receives and circulates it! Perhaps you believe the lie, although it come from a suspicious and polluted source; this only proves the badness of your heart in receiving it. That it hath delight in that which is evil and is full of all malice and subtlety. And by receiving for truth that which is so obviously false, and giving currency to it in evil speaking, you become an accomplice with the first inventor of it; you make it your own, and cover yourself with all the blots that stain his character.

In every view that can be taken of evil speaking, a secret pleasure in detraction, a malicious and envious spirit are discoverable. And a temper more base than this, where can you find?

Should we consider the consequences of evil-speaking, as society and individuals are injured by it, the guilt of the crime is still enhanced. It wounds like the assassin, it stirs up enmity and resentment, it exposes to temptation that spirit which instead of thinking no evil, is ready to suspect all evil, and which instead of rejoicing in the truth rejoiceth in iniquity; and it breeds contentions and broils. Perhaps however enough hath been said to define the sin and expose its baseness.

To guard us against this sin, we are furnished with many precepts and examples in the gospel. Be ye holy in all manner of conversation—Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles—Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man—To him that ordereth his conversation aright will I show the salvation of God—Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh—Keep thy tongue from evil and thy lips from speaking guile—Every idle word that men shall speak, they shall

give account thereof in the day of judgment—Speak evil of no man—"I am purposed," saith David, "that my mouth shall not transgress—I will take heed to my ways, said he, that I sin not with my tongue: I will keep my mouth with a bridle while the wicked is with me"—The apostle Paul, from being a persecutor exceedingly mad, become mild, and could in the review of his life appeal to others and say, "ye are witnesses how holily, and justly and unblameably we behaved ourselves among you"—and in one greater than David and greater than Paul, in our blessed Lord, we have the brightest example of a conversation always tending to some good—Go and do likewise.

It is true, these precepts and examples are to many very unacceptable. The precepts are too rigid, and the examples unamiable. To maintain a constant guard over our very words, and have them always ordered aright: to be watchful that not even an idle word escape our lips: these are cords of restraints and bands of confinement, that are intolerable to them, they say, "our lips are our own, Who is Lord over us?" But to the heart that is reconciled unto God, to them who have in them the same mind which was also in Christ, the commandments are not grievous, nor the examples despised. They desire to be conformed unto them. They pray for the enlargement of their hearts in the way of the divine commandments, and that they may have the spirit of Christ within, to walk in his steps. They crucify the flesh with its affections and lusts, and exult in every conquest over sin in any form. They rejoice to walk according to the divine will in the gospel, and cheerfully exercise every kind of self-denial that is required. To these, to as many as walk according to the divine rule, we say, peace be on them, even on all the Israel of God—"Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge? Let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom." A. B.

MESSRS. EDITORS,

It is the request of some of your readers, that the following letter from a gentleman to his brother, should obtain a place in your Magazine. If you think it worthy, you may comply with their request. S.

December 13th. 1806.

VERY DEAR BROTHER,

THIS day commences the fortieth year of my life; and when I look back, how short it appears! And probably the greatest part of my days are already numbered and finished. Such a reflection should press upon me the great importance of filling up what remains with usefulness and duty.

As you are my only brother, you must be sensible that my affections for you are peculiarly strong. You are every day the subject of my thoughts and prayers; and I hope you will not consider it unkind in me, if I address you in a serious and solemn manner. I have been wishing, for some time, to write to you; but a multiplicity of business has hitherto prevented.

Yet as delays are always dangerous, I am determined to omit it no longer.

We were early dedicated to God in baptism, and have had, in our youth, much religious instruction. We have undoubtedly, been the subjects of many parental supplications. How often have we been carried to the throne of grace in the arms of prayer ! We have become men, and heads of families, and the duties devolving upon us are indeed weighty. We have children to train up to be vessels of wrath, or vessels of mercy ; and their future happiness or misery, under God, greatly depends on us. And it is certain, that we must meet our children in another world, where we must give an account how we have discharged our duty towards them —how we have fulfilled all the divine requirements, and how we have improved our mercies and afflictions. God has given us his revealed word, and told us that we must be holy here, or we can never be happy hereafter. It will avail us nothing, could we possess the whole of this world, if we are not rich towards God.

You, my dear brother, have shared largely in divine goodness, and are, therefore, under correspondent obligations to your gracious benefactor. God blessed you with a worthy companion, who was willing to encourage you in the duties of religion, and who has left you two little pledges of conjugal love. But for wise reasons, he who gave, saw fit to snatch her from you, and clothe you with sackcloth. In that sore affliction your mind was impressed, and you seemed to feel the importance of religion. I am sensible that you treat it and its professors with becoming respect. And I approve of the sentiment contained in the following sentences in your letter to—— " If religion has a friend, who is not a professor of it, I really think myself to be one."—" I had rather possess the good opinion of the beggar on the dunghill, if a real Christian, than the prince on the throne, if an infidel." This certainly shows a veneration for religion. But, Sir, the great question is, have you, real religion at heart ? Has Christ been formed within you the hope of glory ? If so, it becomes you to confess him before men, and maintain a Christian walk. But if not, how dangerous is your situation ! and every day renders it more so !

As we are all dependent on God, it becomes us to acknowledge our dependence, and go to him for the blessings we need. Prayer is a duty, which you will permit me, once more, to urge upon you with all the earnestness of an affectionate brother, and I trust your new and worthy companion will be willing to exert herself to encourage you in the same duty.

How reasonable is it when we rise in the morning, that we should unitedly with our families acknowledge the providence of God in our preservation, and implore his continued mercies, assistance and protection ? You plead your inability. But I cannot feel that there is much weight in the excuse. If you want any thing of a fellow creature, you can find language to ask for it. Why then can you

not express your wants both spiritual and temporal, to your heavenly Father, who only is able to supply them ? We have the greatest encouragement to this duty in the word of God : " Seek the Lord and his strength, seek his face continually."—" If thou seek him, he will be found of thee ; but if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off for ever." (1 Chron. xvi. 11, and xxviii, 29.) " I love them that love me ; and those that seek me early shall find me." (Prov. viii. 17.) " And ye shall seek me, and shall find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart..' (Jer. xxix. 13.) " Watch ye, therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man." (Luke xxxi. 36.) The apostle exhorts to " continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving." (Col. iv. 2.) To the Thes. he says, " Pray without ceasing." i. e. Be always in a praying frame, and never forget, nor suffer your daily seasons for prayer to pass unimproved. The apostle Pet. exhorts thus : " Be ye sober, and watch unto prayer." The bible is full of exhortations to this duty, and I think we cannot omit it and be blameless.

Do, my dear brother, think seriously of these things, and let not the fear of a scoffing world, deter you from duty. Begin, if you have not already, and persevere, and you will never regret it. If you find yourself embarassed through diffidence, prepare a form, and commit it to memory, and begin in that way ; and you will soon find yourself able to overcome all your difficulties arising from diffidence.

For such dependent creatures, as we are, prayer is surely a most seasonable duty. How reasonable that we should go to God morning and evening with our families, and implore his blessing and protection, and the influences of his spirit, which we always need.

But I will desist, with only intreating you not to be so much cumbered about much serving, as to neglect the one thing needful ; but, above all things, to make sure of that good part which shall never be taken from you. For the present, I will wish you good night, imploring for you, divine mercy, and everlasting blessings.

From your sincerely
affectionate brother,
D.

Messrs. Editors,

I have ever read, with indescribable pleasure, the animating accounts of the special work of God, which has been wrought in various parts of this country, and in other parts of the Christian world ; and which have been published in your highly useful Magazine, and in other publications of a similar nature. And considering that every instance of the kind strikingly exhibits the sovereign grace and power of God, and warms the heart of every true believer, I have been strongly inclined, and often solicited to contribute my mite to this important stock of information. But, for certain reasons, I have hitherto deferred

it; and perhaps, at this late period, you may suppose it had better be finally omitted. This, however, I submit to your better judgment; and proceed to give you a brief account of the late revival of religion in this town, which you will dispose of as you think proper.

AT the time of my settlement here, in the ministry, which was in August 1799, a general stupidity prevailed among the people with respect to religion. In autumn following, I proposed to the church to appoint a conference, which should be attended once a fortnight, for the purpose of prayer, and religious improvement. On these meetings, all were invited to attend, who felt a disposition. Curiosity, or some other motive, excited a more general attendance than was expected, and we soon experienced some happy fruits. At the third meeting, if I rightly remember, a woman in middle life, was deeply impressed, and went home in great distress. Similar feelings were soon produced in her husband, and both were extremely anxious for their spiritual welfare. They were both professors of religion, maintained a good moral character, and supported the form of religion in their family, but they now found that they were destitute of the one thing needful. Sleep departed from their eyes, and they were filled with horror. But a sovereign God soon released them from this bondage, and spake peace to their souls. The genuineness of the work of grace on their hearts has been hitherto exemplified in their life and conversation.

Several instances of a similar kind occurred in the three succeeding years; and several additions were made to the church. But nothing very special appeared, except a strong opposition to the doctrines of the gospel, such as the total moral depravity of mankind, divine sovereignty, election, and regeneration, as a special work of the spirit of God, until some time in the latter part of the winter, and in the spring 1803. Then our conferences, which had been attended once a week for more than two years, became more crowded, and it was thought proper to appoint an additional conference on every sabbath evening, the other being attended on every Thursday evening.—These also become very much crowded, and many became deeply sensible of their guilt and danger We soon found occasion to appoint a third conference on Tuesday evening, making three conferences each week. At these meetings, one great object was to illustrate and enforce the doctrines of grace, particularly the holiness and sovereignty of God—the sinner's total depravity, and entire dependence—the necessity of the atonement and the electing grace of God.—In May, June, July, and August following our meetings were most crowded and solemn. God was now in very deed, among us manifesting his sovereign power and grace in bringing down the lofty looks of man and subduing the pride of the human heart. Some who were strongly opposed to the work at its commencement, and employed against it the shafts of ridicule, were brought to submit to the power of divine grace, and to

embrace those truths which they before opposed. Though many were deeply impressed, and extremely anxious for their immortal interest, yet no enthusiasm or noise was observed, except what was made by the opposition to the work. Balls and carnal amusements, which had before been prevalent among the youth, were now laid aside, and the awful concerns of their souls engaged their attention. Evening lectures were occasionally preached by neighboring ministers, which were attended with much solemnity.

Though this work was confined to no particular age, yet the youth, and young married people were the largest sharers. Several, however far advanced in life were hopefully made the subjects of divine grace.

From the time we began to attend religious conferences, which was in Autumn 1799, till the awakening began in 1803, twelve were added to the church. From the fifth of March 1803, to the close of that year, forty persons came forward, and publicly professed the religion of Jesus. To this number twenty three have since been added, making in the whole sixty three, who may be considered as fruits of this revival. And, excepting in two or three instances, they have manifested the sincerity of their profession by an orderly Christian walk. This was truly a precious season, which many, I trust, will remember with joy in eternity.

The character of the work was very similar to that of the several revivals, of which we have had accounts from various parts of our country. But it has since declined, and a greater degree of coldness and stupidity has succeeded. We, however, still attend two conferences a week, one on Sabbath and the other on Thursday evening, which are sometimes full and solemn. In addition to these, we have now a church conference on the last Tuesday night in every month, one principal object of which is to pray for divine influences. May the friends of Zion unite with us at the throne of grace for this greatest of all blessings.

The feelings and sentiments entertained by the subjects of this work, may be learned from a few instances which I have selected, and shall now state.

One young lady, in giving an account of the exercises of her mind, after describing her distress under a sense of sinfulness and opposition of heart to God, writes thus:—"On the evening of the same day, I attended a conference meeting, which was solemn and edifying. Here new feelings occupied my breast. I thought I felt wholly resigned to the will of God, and that I could praise him, even were he to send me to hell. Since that evening, my feelings have been very different from what they ever were before. Every thing appears new. My bible is quite a new book, and the doctrines of grace I cordially approve. I think I have reason to believe, that it was on the evening above mentioned, if ever, that God made me willing to accept of salvation, and embrace the Saviour on the terms of the gospel. It is not in consequence of any thing that I have done, but from the bound-

less mercy and free grace of God, that he has been pleased to bring my soul out of the horrible pit and miry clay, and cause it to rest, as I humbly hope, on the rock Christ Jesus."

Another, in discribing her distress of mind and opposition of heart to God, writes thus: "—What to do I knew not. If I went to my bible for relief I found none. If I attempted to pray, I found no satisfaction. All that I did or ever had done was sin. I found that I was entirely opposed to God and his wise decrees, and sometimes felt disposed to accuse him of partiality—that he was not so kind to me as to some others. At other times I felt myself to be the chief of sinners, and that it required a longer time for me to repent. I thought that if I could see my heart as it really was, I should be some better, and consequently that Christ would receive me. But alas! I was attempting to be my own Saviour. At length I was brought to feel that I was utterly unable to save myself; that, during my whole life, I had never done one act from a right motive; but that I had been constantly adding sin to sin. But in those distressing hours, God, I trust, compelled, or secretly constrained me to throw down the weapons of my rebellion, and to cast myself at Immanuel's feet, and to feel reconciled to the dispensations of grace. This reconciliation I think I realized, at a conference meeting on the evening of the 23d of June, 1803. That was the time, as I humbly hope, when God was pleased, of his infinite mercy, to beam the rays of divine glory into my broken heart. I saw such beauty and holiness in God as no tongue can describe. I wondered that I had never seen such a glorious God, and precious Saviour before; and I was filled with astonishment that I was then out of hell."

Another instance, which I would mention is a woman about 40 years of age. She gave this account of herself: "I was," said she, "one of that unhappy number, who depend on morality for salvation. I thought that if I lived a moral life, God would not be so unjust as to make me for ever miserable. Thus I continued until I repeatedly heard the doctrine of election and divine decrees. I found that my heart was dreadfully opposed to such doctrines. I could not bear to think that I was in the hands of a sovereign God. It was too mortifying to my proud heart to grant that he is the potter, and I the clay." Such were her feelings for some time. On returning from meeting one sabbath, being greatly irritated at the doctrines which she had heard, she rashly formed this resolution, that she would quit the public worship of God and attend to her bible only. Soon after she got home, she took her bible and sat down. On opening the sacred volume, the first passage which engaged her attention was the following: *Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified.* Several other passages of a similar import occurred to her mind, and she immediately saw that the doctrines, with which she had

been quarrelling, were clearly contained in the holy scriptures, and that in opposing them she had opposed God. This filled her with extreme distress, and she was impressed with the idea, that she was one of the non-elect, and consequently that she must be miserable for ever. She saw that she was dead in trespasses and sins—that all her morality was of a selfish kind—and that she had never performed one act of duty acceptable to God. She remained in this situation, not a long time before she received comfort, and was made to rejoice in the character and government of God. She has ever since been peculiarly attached to those doctrines, to which she had been most violently opposed.

A young man, now a member of Yale College, in stating his views and feelings, expressed himself thus:—"I began, as I supposed, to reform my conduct, and live a better life. I attended the outward means of religion, and was more strict on the Sabbath. But still I did not find that comfort in religion which I sought; for I found that I had no delight in holiness, to which my heart was opposed. If I asked advice of religious people, the answer would be, *repent and believe, and give up yourself to Christ.* But how to do this I knew not. In this situation I knew not what to do. My own works did me no good, but rather seemed to make me worse. I determined to abandon my self-dependence, and rely only on Christ for salvation. I remained not long in this situation. One evening, as I was returning from meeting, if I am not deceived, I felt the love of the Saviour in my heart. I thought he was truly the one altogether lovely. I thought I was willing to own him for my prophet, priest and king. I now saw that if I was born into the kingdom of Christ, it was through the sovereign grace of God, and not for any thing that I had done."

I might mention a number of other instances very similar to those already described, but I forbear, and confine myself to one other, which is the most striking.

A man between 40 and 50 years of age, his wife having, a few weeks before, been hopefully made a subject of divine grace, had his attention called up by an extraordinary dream. The strongest convictions immediately ensued. His distress was so great, that he observed to a person present, that should he hold his finger in the candle, and let it burn off, it would be less than what he then endured. He felt his heart strongly opposed to God, and to the methods of his grace. In this situation he remained several days, being almost, or quite in despair. He one day retired into the field, with little expectation of ever returning. He felt himself to be one of the greatest of sinners, and expected soon to plunge into eternal woe. While sitting in this situation, he seemed to feel a stroke on his back, at which he immediately started up, but did not discover from whence it come. This distress immediately left him, and the first object which attracted his attention, was a bunch of flowers, which to him,

appeared the most beautiful he ever saw. He took them into his hand with a view to carry them to his wife; and when he cast his eyes abroad upon the fields, to him the face of nature assumed a new appearance, and all the works of God were full of beauty beyond what he could describe. On his returning home, those who saw him immediately perceived in him a great alteration. He went out borne down with distress and sorrow, and returned full of joy. He now thinks that if he ever experienced a change of heart, it was at that time, though he then had not the most distant idea of any such thing. Such have been the wonderful effects of divine grace on the hearts of sinners. From the most obdurate enemies God is able to form the most cordial friends.

In the extracts contained in the preceding narration, the phraseology has, in some instances, been a little altered, but not so as, in any instance, to alter the sense.

May the Lord continue to revive his work, to build up Zion, and to display the banners of the cross throughout this land and world.

I am, &c.

DAVID SMITH.

Durham, Jan. 1807.

From the Christian Observer.

On the Temporal Advantages flowing from True Religion.

IT is a frequent mistake to suppose that the advantages of religion are confined to another world, and the preparation for it. Religion, however, has a no less intimate relation to the present life, its beneficial influence affecting the happiness not only of individuals of every temper and disposition, in all circumstances and situations, but of societies and nations. Religion instructs and assists, encourages and animates, in the great work of reforming whatever is amiss, and of altering whatever conduces to the general unhappiness of mankind. The tendency of it is to make this life not merely a preparation for the kingdom of heaven, but a resemblance and fore-taste of it.

I need hardly observe, for example, that it is the tendency of the passions, by which men are generally actuated, to deceive, enslave, and hurry on to misery and ruin, those who neglect the remedy which God has given us in the gospel against their too powerful influence. Lust, vanity, envy, anger, impatience, pride, and avarice, like wayward children, torment the breast which nourishes them, and even fill the world with misery. How vast a multitude have been sacrificed, ere they have lived out half their days, to excessive drinking! How many, from the love of luxury and dissipation plunge themselves into poverty, debt, and a prison! Not a few, urged by avarice, and lured with the bait of a large gain in prospect, ruin themselves, their families, and perhaps, many innocent and worthy persons! How many from peevishness, impatience, or impetuosity of their tempers, are perpetually disquieted themselves, and disquieting all around them! Such are a few of the effects of the ty-

ranny of the passions. Now it is the end of religion to prescribe bounds to these, to correct their evil tendency, and to arm us with power against them. It instructs us to watch against their first emotions, to dread those pursuits and enjoyments which minister fuel to them, and to be perpetually engaged in mortifying our corrupt affections. And thus while in others the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eye, and the pride of life are gratified, and by gratification encouraged and cherished, the truly religious man is anxiously withdrawing his "affections from the things of the earth, and setting them on the things that are above." "He is dead to the world," and his "life is hid with Christ in God." Religion, by thus bridling the impetuosity of the passions, as well as by imparting elevated views and hopes, is directly calculated to tranquillize the mind in all the varying circumstances of life, even in those which are the most adverse and afflicting.

But here it must be noted that the advantages which have been stated to result from religion, are confined to those who are truly and earnestly religious. Let not those who are contented with a superficial knowledge of the truths of the Gospel, and a still more superficial practice of its sacred duties, vainly imagine they shall obtain peace of mind, or exemption from the dominion of tormenting passions. The degree of religion which such possess, often serves only to excite their fears, to produce anxiety and irritation, and to fill their minds with a fretfulness and gloom, which extend their influence to all the circumstances of their temporal situation. The principles of the Gospel must be digested in the soul by much reflection, and constant prayer; the hope of future glory must be realized to the mind by frequent meditation; and the power of the Redeemer in his various offices be habitually felt; before the peace of God is shed abroad in the heart.

It may be proper, however, to shew by some examples, how it is that religion is fitted to produce those effects on human happiness which have been ascribed to it. Is any one hurried away with a levity and fickleness of temper, which prevent application to business, and encourage habits of dissipation? Let him embrace hy faith the truths of the Gospel, those truths which present to his view the awful realities of the invisible world, the shortness of time, the nearness of eternity, the strictness of the day of judgment, and the worth of the soul. A belief of these truths is surely calculated to make the most giddy sober, and the most dissipated serious. —Is any one, on the contrary, a prey to melancholy ideas which throw a gloom over every earthly prospect of felicity? Would to God that he knew those glad tidings of great joy which are able, in the figurative language of prophecy, to make the dumb to sing, and the lame man to leap as an hart;—that he understood what treasures of mercy are laid up by God for the righteous; what inestimable blessings are communicated to those who put their trust in God!—Is there a person laboring under a covetous

temper, his heart hardened against the necessities and wants of his fellow creatures? What will soften his heart, and produce liberality of mind, if the free forgiveness, the grace and mercy of Christ Jesus do not move him? In the case of the prodigal also, whom the impending ruin of his family is unable to affect, we may perceive the benefit of religion: for religion brings him back crying, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee."

Mark likewise the benefits of religion in times of public calamity, and in scenes of private suffering. Changes and afflictions are incident to all; and how bitterly will they be felt by those who are destitute of the consolations which religion affords. How hard is it, for instance, to bear the loss of property; to have our hopes of a comfortable subsistence for ourselves and our families at once cut off, perhaps thro' no fault or defect of prudence on our part; and to be left a prey to want after the labor of a whole life has been employed, and supposed to be successfully employed, in acquiring a decent provision! How painful to be bereaved of those in whom our life was bound up, a dear wife, an affectionate husband, or a dutiful child, the stay and support of our declining age;—to meet with unkindness, perhaps, in those on whom we had conferred many benefits;—to see ourselves, as we grow older, less and less valued, and losing one after another the comforts of life;—to feel ourselves subject to some fatal distemper, which medicine cannot relieve, and which holds us as prisoners in our houses, destroys our activity, consumes our vigor, drinks up our spirits, and leaves us melancholy and dejected;—to know that we are likely soon to be called away from a family wholly depending on us for support, and consequently left dependent on the precarious bounty of strangers, or exposed to all the miseries of poverty! Now is not religion beneficial, if it will alleviate these calamities? Can its value be described, if it will enable men to bear such evils as these with patience? In such cases religion alone promises a resource to the sufferer. Wealth itself becomes disgustful under many of these circumstances, and the heart turns with aversion even from the most favorable pursuits. But let religion in all its sovereign power be felt, and mark the effect which it will produce. It will instil patience, teach submission, lighten the burden, communicate support, and endue with strength. It will teach the sufferer to look at joys which never fade, at a portion which is never to be taken away, to an Almighty God, and to a wise and beneficent Father. Faith and hope will concur to support him, while they shew him a better world to come, where all tears shall be wiped away from the eyes, and all things shall be made new.

How different are the prospects of that man, who having passed his life without religion, comes at length for the first time, when on his dying bed, seriously to consider, that all he has heard of the righteous judgment of God against sin may possibly be true: nay that it

probably is true. How melancholy and distressing must his reflections be, when in such a state as this he looks into the invisible world; considers what might have been gained in it, and what may now be dreaded; how dreadful the loss of the soul; how intolerable a ruin that is for ever and ever! Keenly will he then feel that religion might have been not only the repose of a dying bed, but its consolation and joy.

But religion is attended with beneficial effects not only to the individual who practises it, but to all who are placed within the influence of truly religious persons. *Children* of a pious parent will have their minds stored with useful instructions, will be guarded from the influence of evil passions, will be saved from many a hurtful lust, and many a pang of remorse, and will reap an abundant harvest of prayer; if pious, they will be dutiful and affectionate, for piety will make them mindful of their obligations, and will strengthen by the tie of duty the bond of natural attachment. *Servants and masters* who truly fear God, will live in mutual confidence and peace. Angry passions will not disturb the peace of the house, nor discontent poison the pleasure of domestic intercourse. How happy must that family be where every member of it, enjoying peace in his own soul, through the knowledge of God and of Christ, meets the rest to minister to their comfort, and to exercise towards them acts of cheerful attention, kindness, and love;—where the indulgence of no jarring passions interrupts the general harmony. Let us suppose but one family, in which the precepts of the Gospel have their full influence; a family loving without dissimulation, kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love, in honor preferring one another, not slothful in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord, rejoicing with them that rejoice, and weeping with them that weep, minding not high things, but condescending to men of low estate, recompensing to no man evil for evil, but as far as in them lies doing good to all men: surely such a family would not only be happy in itself, but a blessing to a whole neighbourhood. Let the view be enlarged: let the whole world be supposed to partake of the same spirit, and then how beneficial would religion appear to be even in the present life! There would be no restless jealousies between subjects and their governors, no violent animosities between contending parties in the state, no war and bloodshed between nations. All men would be brethren. No scenes of cruelty would shock the eye, no cry of oppression wound the ear. Tyranny and slavery would be only remembered with a sigh, that human nature should once have suffered them. The voice of joy and praise would be heard in every cottage, and the sufferings, which still remained in the earth, would be alleviated by the affectionate tenderness of every neighbor and every stranger, for every stranger would be a friend.

But, alas! where are such scenes to be found? Goodness flourishes not on this earth: it

is here like a plant in a soil unfavorable to it, where its growth is stunted, and its beauty injured. Families must yet be scenes of jealousy, distrust, and unkindness: the eye must yet be pained to behold the tumults and distractions of nations; and the ear to hear the lamentations of misery, and the groans of despair. What do all these things teach us but the misery of sin, and the blessedness of religion? Let us read in them the inscription of heaven drawn in characters too legible to be mistaken: "Godliness is profitable for all things, *having the promise of the life that now is*, as well as of that which is to come." Sin, indeed, is the cause of misery, and in proportion to the increase of the former is the latter also increased. The evils which God inflicts on man are comparatively few in number, and he mingles with them all something which may alleviate or compensate them. But the evils which we bring upon ourselves, or which others bring upon us, through the influence of vicious passions, are far more numerous, and also far more ruinous in their effects.

But whether the evils we endure be of the former or of the latter description, religion is their proper, their only remedy, and in proportion as it is sought with earnestness, and practised with sincerity, evil will be less abundant, and that which remains will be less keenly felt, and blessings will spring up and multiply on every side.

But let it never be forgotten that true religion is not a cold assent to certain dogmas: it is not a natural softness and benevolence of temper: it is not abstinence merely from gross sins, or the giving to God a part of our hearts, and some vacant portions of our time. No! The religion of Christ is the entire subjection and devotedness of the soul to God himself. It is the practical acknowledgment of his unlimited sovereignty, and the unreserved dedication of every faculty to his service. It is, in the emphatic language of the Apostle, "Christ formed in the heart," by the powerful energy of the holy Spirit, in consequence of which the Christian becomes "a new creature" with regard both to his temper and practice; "partakes of a divine nature;" and his members, formerly "servants of sin," are employed "as instruments of righteousness unto God." This is real godliness. The mere form of godliness, too often mistaken for the reality, brings no just or lasting peace to the mind, implants not the love of God, corrects not the sinful dispositions of the heart, is of no service in the distressing scenes of life, and produces little or no benefit to society at large. From this shadow of religion the opinion of the world respecting the substance has been too generally taken, and its effects estimated: it is no wonder, therefore, that it should have been judged by many to be of no use in promoting the virtue or happiness of the world. "The kingdom of God," however will still be found, notwithstanding the scoff of the infidel and the mistakes of the undiscerning, to be "righteousness, peace, and joy, in the Holy Ghost;" and to attain to this kingdom will appear at the last to have been the only object worthy of our pursuit. D. V.

Donation to the Missionary Society of Connecticut.

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